

Sq'ewqel Referendum Information Package

WHAT IS LAND CODE

Sq'ewqel (Seabird Island) created its own Land Code to control Seabird Island land management. This Land Code is our set of rules for using, protecting, and making decisions about our land. It reflects Sq'ewqel's vision for smart growth and caring for the environment so that future generations can enjoy it too.

On **June 2, 2025**, Sq'ewqel (Seabird Island) will hold an important referendum. This is a significant opportunity for band members to have their say and vote on key decisions that affect our community's future.

This information package provides essential details about the upcoming vote, so band members can feel confident and informed when casting their ballots.

In the weeks leading up to the referendum, additional information will be shared through community meetings, at the band office, on our website, and across our social media platforms. Stay connected and stay informed — your voice matters.

Why is this Referendum happening?

Our Land Code says land leases on Seabird Island can only be for up to 25 years. If someone wants a longer lease, it must be approved through a referendum vote.

Right now, two groups are asking for leases longer than 25 years:

1. BC Housing – They are funding the building of 34 new affordable homes on Seabird Island.
2. AE Concrete – They lease land in the Sq'ewqel Business Park.

What Are Band Members Voting On?

Chief and Council are asking you to vote “yes” or “no” on two exceptions to the Land Code. Each question needs a majority vote (50% plus one) to pass.

1. **Referendum question 1:** Do you approve of Seabird Island leasing land on Pípehò:M Road to ourselves through our Seabird Housing Society for a term of 42 years, for the BC Housing Affordable Housing Project?
2. **Referendum question 2:** Do you approve an extension of the Seabird Island lease for AE Concrete from the present 25 years to a 75-year term?



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For More Information about the referendum questions,
contact eatocc@seabirdisland.ca
or visit <https://www.seabirdisland.ca/referendums-elections>



Hold the Date! May 14, 2025

Referendum Information Meeting

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Band Office Gym



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34 Sq'ewqel new housing units, funded by BC Housing

BC Housing is providing money for Seabird Island to build 34 units along Pípehò:M Road. BC Housing requires a lease agreement between Seabird Island and our Seabird Housing Society for a period of 40 years, plus 2 years for construction – a total of 42 years.

Under the Land Code, a lease of more than 25 years, even to the Band itself, requires approval by eligible voters in a referendum.



A three-storey multi-family building will have 1-and 3-bedroom townhouses and 1-and 2-bedroom apartments. Some units will be wheelchair accessible now, and others can be made wheelchair accessible in future if needed.



The Elders' building will have 12 accessible one- and two-bedroom units.

Referendum question 1: Do you approve of Seabird Island leasing land on Pípehò:M Road to ourselves through our Seabird Housing Society for a term of 42 years, for the BC Housing Affordable Housing Project?



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BC Housing Lease and Mortgage Background:

Seabird Island has received or will receive funding from the British Columbia Housing Management Commission (“**BC Housing**”) for the construction of 34 affordable housing units on Lots 308 and 309 at 8411 Pípehò:M Road (the “**Lands**”).

Seabird Island proposes to structure this project by providing a lease (the “**Lease**”) to its wholly owned society, the Seabird Housing Society, for a proposed term of 42 years. The Seabird Housing Society will in turn be the tenant and be responsible for operating and management of the housing units for the term of the Lease, pursuant to an operating agreement with BC Housing (the “**Operating Agreement**”). Because the Lease is intended to be to a Seabird Island-controlled entity and the project is intended to provide much needed housing to members, the rent payable by Seabird Housing Society to Seabird Island under the Lease is expected to be nominal.

BC Housing has agreed to provide Seabird Island with funding for the construction of the housing units, by way of a forgivable loan (the “**Forgivable Loan**”). Provided that the Seabird Housing Society is compliant with the Operating Agreement and ensures that the rent it receives is enough to cover the operating costs, the loan starts to be forgiven at year 11 and will be gradually forgiven over a 25-year period thereafter. Assuming the above, Seabird Island will not have to pay back any amounts under the Forgivable Loan.

BC Housing requires that the Forgivable Loan be secured by way of a 35-year mortgage (the “**Mortgage**”) plus construction time. The Mortgage, under Land Code, can be secured against the Lease. Because the proposed term of the Lease and the Mortgage are each greater than 25 years, section 19.3(c) of the Land Code requires approval of these terms via referendum.



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AE Concrete Lease in Sq'ewqel Business Park

AE Concrete (AEC) makes precast concrete products and operates on 16 acres of land in the Sq'ewqel Business Park, where Chief Hali Road and Chowat Road meet.

AEC pays lease payments monthly and property use taxes annually. AEC's lease is reviewed and renewed every five years so rent can be adjusted to match the current market.

AEC currently has a 25-year lease. AEC is requesting an increase to 75 years: it makes business sense for AEC and will give Seabird Island 75 years of income.

Under Land Code, the maximum lease term for Seabird Island Band, including renewals and extensions, is 25 years. Anything over 25 years requires approval by eligible voters through a referendum.



Referendum question 2: Do you approve an extension of the Seabird Island lease for AE Concrete from the present 25 years to a 75-year term?



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More information about AE Concrete Lease in Sq'ewqel Business Park:

What is AEC?

AE Concrete Products Ltd. (AEC) makes precast concrete products and runs a concrete batching plant. AEC has signed a lease agreement with Seabird Island's holding company, 1456104 BC Ltd., to use 16 acres of land in the 50-acre Sq'ewqel Business Park. The Sq'ewqel Business Park is zoned for commercial and light industrial use.

AEC's lease terms

AEC's current 5-year lease started on December 22, 2023. AEC can currently renew the lease four times, to a total of 25 years.

AEC is requesting an extension of the lease from a maximum of 25 years to 75 years less a day. This provides time for a return on their investment and provides Seabird Island with 75 years of predictable income.

Under Land Code, the maximum lease term for Seabird Island Band, including renewals and extensions, is 25 years. Anything over 25 years requires approval by eligible voters through a referendum.

AEC pays rent based on what the land is worth at the time. The current monthly lease payment of \$80,000 will be indexed over time based on the land's appraised value. That appraised value is assessed every five years. AEC also pays annual property taxes to Seabird Island.

AEC's added value to Seabird Island:

- Partnering with Seabird Island Community School and Seabird College to provide work experience and job training.
- Hiring community members where possible. AEC expects to create 25–45 additional jobs over the next 5 years.
- Offering an education bursary of \$20,000 every year.
- Helping Seabird Island to attract other tenants to the business park.